

# Idaho Steelhead Seasons, Rules and Information

Steelhead are rainbow trout longer than 20 inches in length in the Snake River drainage below Hells Canyon Dam, the Salmon River drainage (excluding lakes and the Pahsimeroi and Lemhi rivers), and the Clearwater River drainage (excluding that portion above Dworshak Dam and lakes). Rainbow trout longer than 20 inches in length with the adipose fin clipped, as evidenced by a healed scar, are defined as steelhead in the Snake River from Hells Canyon Dam upstream to Oxbow Dam and in the Boise River from its mouth upstream to Barber Dam, during steelhead seasons.

Only steelhead with a clipped adipose fin (see Page 40), as evidenced by a healed scar, may be kept. These are hatchery fish that had their adipose fin removed as juveniles. All naturally produced steelhead with an intact adipose fin must be released because they are listed as “Threatened” under the Endangered Species Act (see Page 41). Some hatchery steelhead are not adipose fin clipped and must also be released.

## Licenses – Steelhead Permits

Resident Fishing License .....	\$25.75
Nonresident Fishing License .....	\$98.25
Junior Resident License (14 – 17 years) .....	\$13.75
Junior Nonresident Fishing License .....	\$21.75
Resident Steelhead Permit (Full Season Fishing License Required) .....	\$12.75
Nonresident Steelhead Permit (Full Season Fishing License Required) .....	\$25.75
Nonresident Salmon or Steelhead 3-day License/Permit .....	\$37.50

(Prices are accurate for January 1, 2011  
but are subject to change by Legislative action.)

Anyone fishing for steelhead, except those expressly exempt, must have a valid fishing license and steelhead permit on his/her person to fish for, reduce to possession, or catch-and-release steelhead.

Any person who does not qualify as a resident (see Page 50) must purchase either a nonresident season fishing license and a full-season steelhead permit or a nonresident 3-day salmon/steelhead license/permit.

Children (including nonresident children) under the age of 14 are exempt from purchasing steelhead permits. They may fish without permits if they are accompanied by a valid permit holder, provided that any fish caught must be recorded on

the permit holder’s card and counted in the permit holder’s legal bag, possession and season limit. A resident child under 14 may purchase a permit without a license so that they may catch their own limit of steelhead.

**Non-resident juveniles 14 to 18 may purchase a junior non-resident fishing license and permit so they may catch their own limit of steelhead.**

When excess hatchery steelhead become available at fish hatcheries or trap facilities, they may be released in the Snake River between Hells Canyon and Oxbow dams, and in the Boise River to provide additional fishing opportunity. A steelhead permit is required when fishing for hatchery steelhead stocked by Idaho Fish and Game in these waters.

## Methods of Take

- Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed when fishing for steelhead in the South Fork Clearwater River.
- No person shall kill or retain in possession any steelhead which has been hooked other than in the mouth or jaw. Any steelhead hooked other than in the mouth or jaw must be released. See snagging definition on Page 44.
- Only barbless hooks with a maximum 5/8 inch gap between shank and point may be used when fishing for steelhead in the Salmon and Clearwater river drainages and the Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam. Bending the barb(s) down to the shank of a single, double, or treble hook will meet this requirement.
- Steelhead may be taken with barbed hooks in the Boise River and the Snake River between Hells Canyon and Oxbow dams.
- Any angler, who has attained the bag, possession, or season limit on those waters with steelhead limits, must cease fishing for steelhead including catch-and-release fishing.

## Please Note

- Fishing for or targeting steelhead is prohibited unless a steelhead season is specifically opened for that water.
- Steelhead with a clipped adipose fin, as evidenced by a healed scar, must be killed immediately if being reduced to possession. Otherwise, the steelhead must be released upon landing.
- All fish that are hooked, landed, and reduced to possession shall be counted in the limit of the person hooking the fish.
- Steelhead with an intact adipose fin cannot be reduced to possession and must be released.

- No person shall have in the field or in transit any steelhead from which the head or tail has been removed unless: 1) the angler is ashore and done fishing for the day; 2) the adult steelhead is properly recorded on the anglers steelhead permit; and 3) the fish is processed or packaged with the skin naturally attached to the flesh including a portion with a healed, clipped adipose fin scar. The fish must be processed or packaged in a manner that the number of fish harvested can be readily determined. Processed steelhead cannot be transported by boat.
- Steelhead harvest and angler participation are estimated by a telephone survey conducted within a few weeks after the season closes. You may be called and asked about your effort and success.

Please save your permit until three months after the season has closed or until you are contacted by Idaho Fish and Game.

## River Location Codes

### Snake River

Snake River, downstream from Salmon River	01
Snake River, from Salmon River to Hells Canyon Dam	02
Snake River, Hells Canyon Dam to Oxbow Dam	27

### Clearwater River

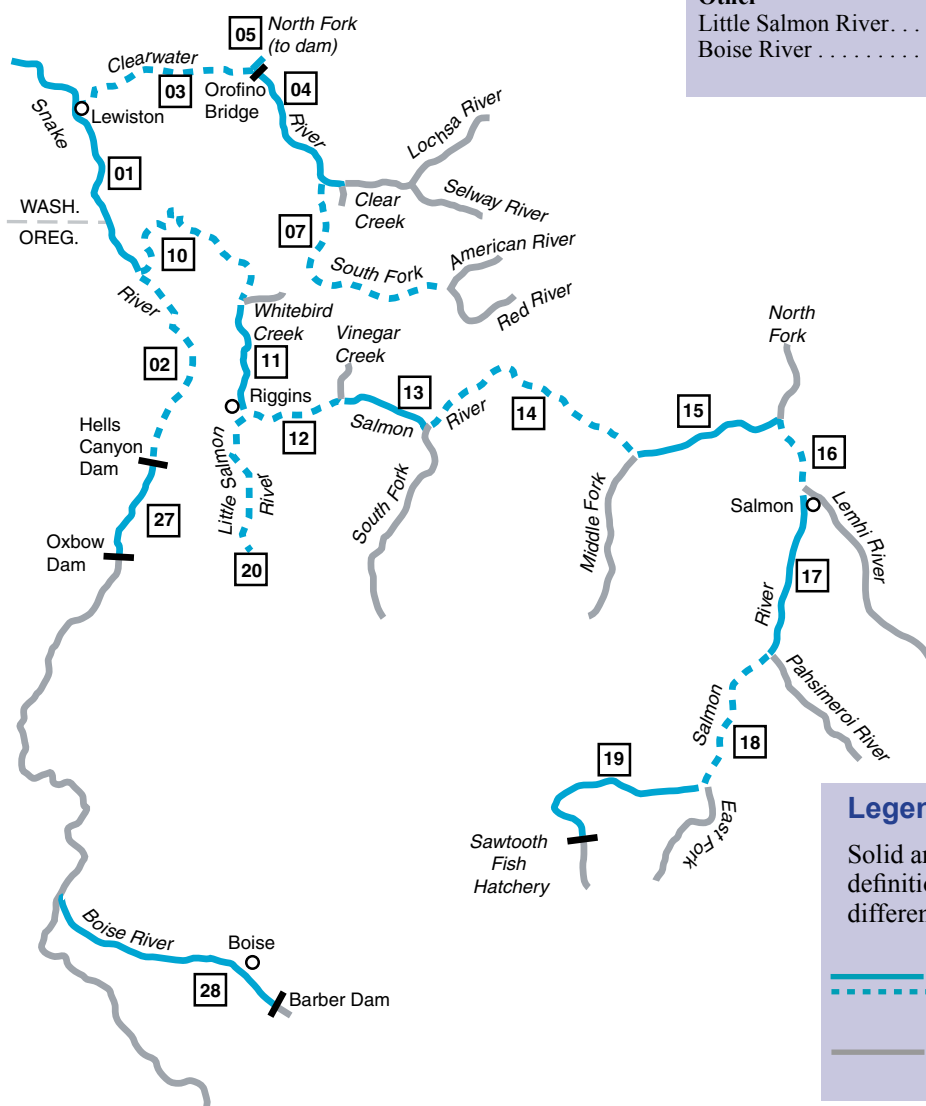
Clearwater River, downstream from Orofino Bridge	03
Clearwater River, upstream from Orofino Bridge	04
North Fork Clearwater River	05
South Fork Clearwater River	07

### Salmon River

Salmon River, downstream from Whitebird Creek	10
Salmon River, Whitebird Creek to Little Salmon	11
Salmon River, Little Salmon to Vinegar Creek	12
Salmon River, Vinegar Creek to South Fork	13
Salmon River, South Fork to Middle Fork	14
Salmon River, Middle Fork to North Fork	15
Salmon River, North Fork to Lemhi River	16
Salmon River, Lemhi River to Pahsimeroi River	17
Salmon River, Pahsimeroi River to East Fork	18
Salmon River, upstream from the East Fork	19

### Other

Little Salmon River	20
Boise River	28



### Legend

Solid and dashed blue lines have the same definitions; they are just alternated to show different location code sections of the rivers.

- Coded steelhead fishing areas
- Closed to the harvest of steelhead or does not contain steelhead.

## Steelhead Seasons and Limits

River Section	Spring Season 20 fish per season						Fall Season 20 fish per season					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Clearwater River</b> from its mouth upstream to the Memorial Bridge of U.S. Highway 12 at Lewiston.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Jul 1 - 31 Catch-and-Release	Aug 1 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession				
<b>Clearwater River: Mainstem and Middle Fork Clearwater River</b> from the Memorial Bridge of U.S. Highway 12 at Lewiston upstream to Clear Creek.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Jul 1 - Oct 14 Catch-and-Release			Oct 15 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession		
Closures: Fishing is <b>prohibited</b> between posted boundaries about 100 yards upstream and downstream from the Nez Perce Tribal Hatchery Ladder and extending into the river channel about 50 yards. Fishing from the shoreline or wading along the perimeter of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is <b>prohibited</b> . Fishing from motorized watercraft is <b>prohibited</b> from the Clearwater River Bridge at Orofino upstream to the confluence of the Selway and Lochsa rivers from Sep 1 - Apr 30. (Note: Fishing for steelhead is not allowed upstream of Clear Creek).												
<b>North Fork Clearwater River</b> from its mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Jul 1 - Oct 14 Catch-and-Release			Oct 15 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession		
Closures: Fishing from the shoreline or wading along the perimeter of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is <b>prohibited</b> . Fishing from any watercraft or wading is <b>prohibited</b> between the posted line about 150 yards upstream from the mouth of the North Fork Clearwater River and the Ahsahka Highway 7 Bridge. When fishing from the Ahsahka Highway 7 Bridge, it is illegal to take any fish downstream of the railroad bridge. Fishing from the railroad bridge is <b>prohibited</b> .												
<b>South Fork Clearwater River</b> from its mouth upstream to the confluence of American and Red rivers.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession.				Closed to steelhead fishing		Jul 1 - Oct 14 Catch-and-Release.			Oct 15 - Dec 31 2 per day, 6 in possession.		
<b>Note:</b> Only single-pointed barbless hooks are allowed when fishing for steelhead or salmon												
<b>Salmon River</b> from its mouth upstream to the Lake Creek Bridge (about 6 miles upstream from the mouth of the Little Salmon River).	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release	Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				
<b>Salmon River</b> from the Lake Creek Bridge to Long Tom Creek (3/4 mile upstream from the Middle Fork Salmon River).	Jan 1 - Mar 31 3 per day, 9 in possession			Closed to steelhead fishing								
<b>Salmon River</b> from Long Tom Creek (3/4 mile upstream from the Middle Fork Salmon River) to posted boundary 100 yards downstream of Sawtooth Hatchery.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing							

Steelhead Seasons and Limits												
River Section	Spring Season 20 fish per season						Fall Season 20 fish per season					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Little Salmon River</b> from its mouth upstream to the U.S. Highway 95 bridge near Smokey Boulder road.	Jan 1 - May 15 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing		Aug 1 - Aug 31 Catch-and-Release	Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				
<b>Snake River</b> from the Washington State line at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers upstream to Hells Canyon Dam.	Jan 1 - Apr 30 3 per day, 9 in possession				Closed to steelhead fishing							
<b>Snake River</b> from Hells Canyon Dam to Oxbow Dam, and <b>Boise River</b> from its mouth upstream to Barber Dam.	Jan 1 - May 31 3 per day, 9 in possession				Not present		Sep 1 - Dec 31 3 per day, 9 in possession					
Adult steelhead are only present in the Boise River and the Snake River above Hells Canyon Dam when stocked by Idaho Fish and Game. Check with regional offices to determine if steelhead have been released that year. A steelhead permit is required to fish for and keep steelhead (rainbow trout longer than 20 inches with a clipped adipose fin). Limits are 3 per day and 9 in possession when steelhead are present. Barbless hooks are not required.												

When and Where You Can Expect to See Listed/Protected Salmon and Steelhead in Idaho			
Sockeye	Spring & Summer Chinook	Fall Chinook	Steelhead
<i>July - September</i>	<i>April - September</i>	<i>August-December</i>	<i>July-May</i>
• Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam	• Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam	• Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam	• Snake River below Hells Canyon Dam
• Salmon River	• Salmon River & tributaries	• Clearwater River	• Clearwater River
• Redfish Lake and Creek		• Lower Salmon River	• Salmon River
• Alturas Lake and Creek			• Tributary streams to these rivers
• Pettit Lake and Creek			



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# Steelhead Fishing in Boundary Waters

Snake River between Idaho, Oregon, or Washington: The holder of a valid Idaho fishing license and steelhead permit may fish for steelhead in the Snake River where it forms the boundary between the states of Idaho and Oregon or Washington, subject to the fish and game laws of Idaho, but may not fish from the shoreline, including wading, and may not fish in sloughs or tributaries on the Oregon or Washington side. Any Oregon or Washington license holder has the same rights and restrictions with reference to the Idaho side. Any angler who fishes on the Snake River or any other water forming an Idaho boundary is entitled to have in possession only the limit allowed by one license regardless of the number of licenses in possession.

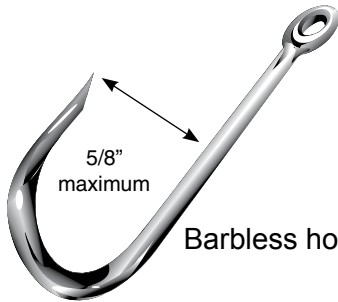
## Permit Validation

When an adult steelhead has been hooked, landed, and reduced to possession (must be killed immediately), the angler hooking the fish must immediately:

- 1. Completely remove one numbered notch from the permit.
- 2. Look up the number code from the River Location Code List and write it in the space provided.
- 3. Enter the month and day the fish was caught.

However, when a steelhead is released rather than reduced to possession, the angler is not required to make an entry on the permit.

A proxy statement is required if a steelhead is reduced to your possession, then gifted to or transported by another individual or party. Please see Page 41.



Barbless hook

Only barbless hooks with a maximum of 5/8 inch gap between the shank and point may be used when fishing for steelhead and salmon

### Unclipped Adipose Fin

Wild or hatchery steelhead or salmon with an unclipped adipose fin **must** be released

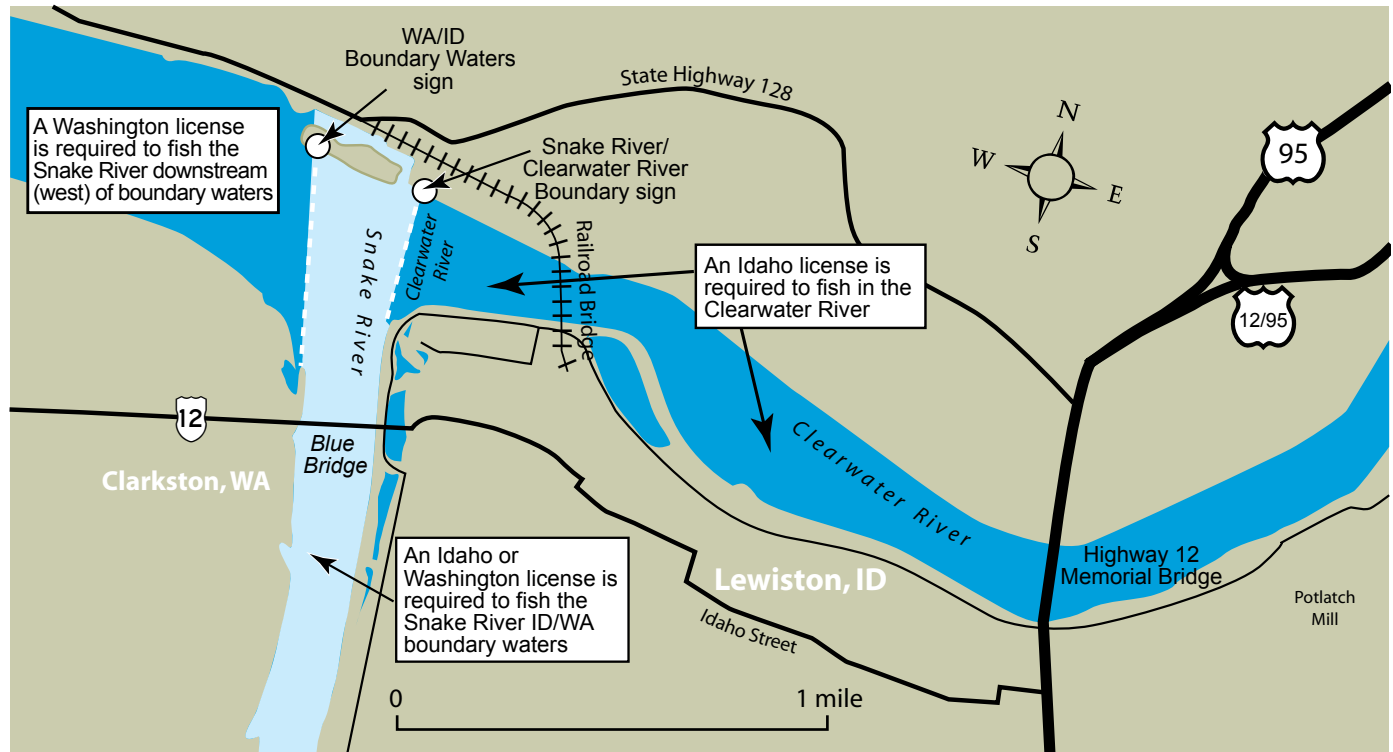


### Clipped Adipose Fin

Hatchery steelhead or salmon may be kept if the adipose fin has been clipped



## Washington/Idaho Fishing Waters Boundaries





## Threatened and Endangered Species

Several of Idaho's fish species have been listed or have been petitioned for listing under the 1973 federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Species are listed when population levels drop so low that they are at a high risk of extinction. Species already listed under the ESA as either "Threatened" or "Endangered" are protected from any form of "take." While over-harvest has been a factor for some resident species, for the most part, these fish are in trouble because their habitat has been damaged or destroyed. Idaho Fish and Game encourages land and water management agencies to make decisions that will benefit fish and wildlife. However, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission's authority is restricted to either regulating harvest or stocking fish, so these are the only tools Idaho Fish and Game has to restore depleted populations or, in some cases, preserve future options.

### Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead

Nearly all of Idaho's naturally-produced anadromous (ocean-going) salmon and steelhead are listed as "Threatened" or "Endangered" under the ESA. Naturally produced spring/summer and fall Chinook salmon and steelhead are listed as "Threatened." Sockeye salmon produced in Alturas, Pettit, and Redfish lakes in the Stanley Basin are listed as "Endangered." They are protected to prevent further declines in abundance. Snake River coho salmon were declared extinct in the mid-1980s but coho salmon have since been reintroduced into the Clearwater River. Neither natural spring/summer Chinook salmon nor reintroduced coho salmon in the Clearwater drainage are listed under the federal ESA, but are protected by state law.

### Angler Be Aware!

Idaho steelhead harvest is restricted to only steelhead with a clipped adipose fin (ad-clipped) to help maximize harvest

opportunity for hatchery produced fish without causing unacceptable loss of naturally produced steelhead. This approach, began in 1987, has allowed anglers to keep an annual average of 64,000 hatchery steelhead for the last 10 years. This approach is also used for hatchery Chinook salmon. Fin clipping allows anglers to differentiate between hatchery produced and wild salmon. This tool allows limited angling opportunity for hatchery Chinook salmon in Idaho while protecting naturally produced fish. Idaho has not had a fishery for wild Chinook salmon since 1978.

You may encounter "Threatened" and "Endangered" salmon and steelhead in Idaho's anadromous waters. Avoid fishing or boating in riffle areas where salmon and steelhead are seen or are likely to spawn. Carefully and quickly release any wild anadromous salmon or wild steelhead. Please help preserve "Threatened" and "Endangered" salmon and steelhead and also preserve your privilege to fish for other fish in waters used by federally protected anadromous salmon and steelhead.

### Know the Difference

Refer to the illustrations on Page 57 to make sure you can distinguish between a small salmon (which may not be harvested) and a juvenile rainbow trout. Small sockeye will be bright silver when found in the Salmon River in the spring or early summer and must be released immediately. Because of their similarity to resident rainbow trout, most streams with populations of wild, juvenile steelhead have special rules to protect them, such as catch-and-release rules in the Middle Fork of the Salmon River drainage.

### PROXY STATEMENT (To transport fish taken by another person)

Angler's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 License No. \_\_\_\_\_ Tag No. \_\_\_\_\_ Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of person transporting \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fish Species	Description and Number Taken	Water Caught	Date

GAME:

Species \_\_\_\_\_ How many \_\_\_\_\_  
 Species \_\_\_\_\_ How many \_\_\_\_\_



## Sportsmen! Sign Your Child's Class Up for Wildlife Express!

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### Idaho Safe Fish Eating Guidelines

The American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least twice a week. Fish are high in protein, full of vitamins and have omega-3 fatty acids that are needed for a healthy heart and for brain development. Fish can be part of a nutritious diet, but it is important to choose fish that are low in pollutants such as Mercury and PCBs.

### Women Who are Pregnant, Planning to Become Pregnant, or are Breastfeeding, and Children Under 15

should be aware of the effects of eating fish with high levels of mercury. At high levels, mercury can affect children or a baby's growing brain and nervous system affecting thinking, language, attention and development. The guidelines below will help you safely choose fish to minimize this risk.

### Eat Fish, Be Smart, Choose Wisely

#### Idaho Sport Fish

**Do** eat younger, smaller fish (within legal limits). They usually contain fewer pollutants than older, larger fish.

**Don't** eat bottom fish such as suckers. They feed at the bottom of water bodies and are more likely to contain higher levels of pollutants.

#### Commercial Fish

**Do** eat up to two meals a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury — like shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock and catfish.

**Don't** eat more than one meal every two weeks of albacore tuna. Albacore tuna has higher levels of mercury than canned light tuna.

**For specific advisories on lakes and streams, please contact the Idaho Fish Consumption Advisory Program at 1-866-240-3553 or visit our website at:**

[www.fishadvisory.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.fishadvisory.dhw.idaho.gov)

#### Idaho Sport Fish

Walleye



1 Meal a Month

Bass



Large Brown Trout



Large Lake Trout



Yellow Perch



Lake Whitefish



Channel Catfish



Salmon



Crappie



Rainbow Trout



#### Fish HIGH in Mercury

#### Fish MEDIUM in Mercury (1 meal every 2 weeks)

#### Fish LOWER in Mercury (1 meal a week)

#### Fish LOWEST in Mercury (2 meals a week)

#### Commercial Fish

Shark Swordfish



Do Not Eat

Albacore Snapper



Orange Roughy



Halibut



Mahi Mahi



Cod Salmon



Catfish Tilapia



Trout Light Tuna

